

[7 August, 2001]

RAJYA SABHA

(a) whether Government have so far taken any effective steps to develop airports of North-Eastern Region;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) if not, what is Government's reaction thereto?

THE MINISTER OF CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI SHARAD YADAV): (a) and (b) Yes, Sir. Airports Authority of India has taken up major works for development of airports of North-Eastern Region which are as follows: Expansion & modification of terminal building, strengthening of runway and expansion of apron and allied works have been completed and boundary wall around newly acquired land is to be completed by December, 2001 at Guwahati. Extension/strengthening of runway has been completed and construction of new terminal building is to be completed by September, 2001 at Lilabari. Construction of terminal building & allied works at Tura, construction of civil enclave terminal building & allied works at Tezpur, expansion & modification of terminal building at Silchar and construction of new terminal building at Imphal have been completed. Strengthening of old apron and expansion/modification of terminal building is to be completed by March, 2002 at Agartala. Construction of new terminal building has been completed and strengthening of runway & allied works is to be completed by September, 2002 at Dimapur.

(c) Does not arise.

Operational Airports in North-Eastern Region

1678. **SHRI KHAGEN DAS:** Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) the names and locations of airports that were operational in North-East prior to independence of India;

(b) the names and locations of airports presently operational in the North-East;

(c) whether some of the pre-independence airports are presently not operational; if so, the reasons therefor and how soon they are expected to be made operational; and

(d) whether Government propose to purchase smaller planes to serve the needs of North-East better?

THE MINISTER OF CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI SHARAD YADAV): (a) No reliable information in regard to the operational airports in North-East region prior to independence of India is available.

(b) The airports at Agartala, Lempui (Aizawl), Bagdogra, Dibrugarh, Dimapur, Guwahati, Imphal, Jorhat, Silchar, Tezpur, Lilabari (North Lakhimpur) and Shillong (Barapani) in the North-East are presently operational but no scheduled flights are operating at present from Lilabari and Shillong airports.

(c) The airports at Passighat, Rupsi, Turial (Aizawl), Shella, Kamalpur, Kailashahar and Khowai in the North-East are presently non-operational. It is true that there has been decrease in the number of airport connected with air services over a period of time. This has been due to the shortage of smaller aircraft with domestic operators. The non-operational airports can be made operational once airlines indicate their plan for starting their operations through those non-operational airports.

(d) Alliance Air, a wholly owned subsidiary of Indian Airlines, have issued a global tender in July, 2001 for dry lease-in of six ATR 42-500 aircraft to improve air connectivity in the country including the North-Eastern Region.

Expansion of new routes

1679. SHRI K.M. KHAN: Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have a proposal for the expansion of air services in the country;

(b) if so, the details of the programmes drawn up in this regard;

(c) whether new routes and additional flights are proposed to be introduced in the existing routes during the current financial year; and

(d) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI SHARAD YADAV): (a) to (d) Airlines operators are free to operate on any route/to connect any place based on their commercial judgement subject, of course, to compliance with the route dispersal guidelines which provide for certain minimum operations in specified category of routes.